

Community Services and Recreation

DRAFT MINUTES/APPROVED

To: Community Services Commission Members

From: Edward J. Swinkoski, Director of Community Services and Recreation

Re: Commission Meeting June 7, 2011

Meeting was called to order at 5:33p.m.

I. Attendance:

Present: Marc Fasano, Paul Kottage, Donna Malley, Judith Meyers, Krista Polinsky.

Absent: Lou Criscuolo, Maggie Jensen, Jim Marshall

Staff: Michael J. Freda, First Selectman

Stephen A Fontana, Third Selectman

Edward J. Swinkoski, Director of Community Services and Recreation

Tony Corniello, LCSW, Vice President of Services, Harbor Health Services

Maggie Goodwin, LCSW, Program Manager, Clinical Services, Harbor Health Services

Carla Riccio, Secretary

II. Acceptance of Minutes:

Marc Fasano made a motion to accept the Minutes of May 3, 2011, seconded by Krista Polinsky.

III. Correspondence:

A letter of resignation dated May 6, 2010 from Commissioner Michael Pepe was received by Secretary Carla Riccio.

The Board of Selectmen are currently in the process of accepting resumes from candidates who are interested in joining the commission. First Selectman Freda anticipates that resumes will be presented, collaborated on among the Selectmen at the July 2011 meeting, and a recommendation made at the August 2011 Board of Selectmen meeting.

IV. Director's Report:

Old Business:

*2010 Census Data:* As a follow up to the request made by Jim Marshall at the March 1, 2011 meeting, First Selectman Michael Freda was present to provide and distribute the 2010 Census Data (CERC Town Profile 2010). This CERC Profile, which includes details surrounding Demographics, Economics, Education, Government, Housing/Real Estate, Labor Force and Quality of Life was reviewed by all.

*Harbor Health:* As a follow up to the request by the commission made at the May meeting, Tony Corniello, LCSW, Vice President of Services, Harbor Health Services and Maggie Goodwin LCSW, Program Manager, Clinical Services, Harbor Health Services joined the meeting to discuss the significant changes that Harbor Health Services have added to the counseling services in the Community Services Department.

In summary:

- -The amount of time the clinicians are seeing clients has increased. As of November 2010, 33% of the counselors' time was spent seeing clients; it has increased to currently 45%. Mr. Corniello explained how this translates to more services for clients, and ultimately more revenue for the Town.

- -Client census has increased. As of November 2010, a reported 100 clients were being served; currently 150 clients are being served (figures include those in either individual and/or group counseling). There is currently no waiting list.

Ms. Meyers asked about the demographics of the population being served. Ms. Goodwin indicated that the population varies widely and constantly changes, from the traditional group who suffer from chronic mental illness, to the elderly population, some families, couples and a limited amount of children. She will provide a specific demographic breakdown and have it distributed to the commissioners. Additionally, Mr. Corniello indicated that while the Counseling clinic has a license to provide substance abuse counseling, there has not been a high demand for these services at this point.

In light of this fact, Mr. Freda discussed that one of the goals of the Substance Abuse Action Council (SAAC) has been to create a greater level of awareness of substance abuse throughout the community. He summarized the various events and great strides that the SAAC has taken in the last year, including the Prescription Medication Take Back program, which collected an average of \$200,000 worth of prescription medications from residents' medicine cabinets in April 2011, a \$150,000 increase from the collection that took place one year earlier. The SAAC is comprised of the Police Chief, Fire Chief, Mr. Freda, Mr. Swinkoski, various members of the clergy, parents who have experienced or currently experience children with substance abuse issues. In light of current initiatives, Mr. Freda is currently in discussions with the superintendent, requesting that he join the SAAC in attempt to try and extend the DARE program through the middle school and to put some type of drug curriculum into place in the school. North Haven Middle Principal Philip Piazza currently sits on the SAAC as well.

In light of the topic of substance abuse, Mr. Freda indicated that he currently in preliminary discussions with Harbor Health and Mr. Swinkoski regarding bringing in support from a licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor (LADC) to the current counseling services being offered. This is the next stage that Mr. Freda is striving for in combating this "hidden" substance problem that exists in North Haven. Mr. Freda asked if the commission would be in support of pursuing this initiative to help fill the gap that exists in our counseling services to which the commission agreed yes.

- New groups have been added to the services being provided, including an on-site Smoking Cessation group, which is funded by a grant by the State Department of Public Health, thus incurring no cost to the Town and no cost to the clients. Nicotine replacements and medications are being offered at no cost.
- Billing has increased by 59% from May to November 2010. A lot of clients with Medicaid and Medicare are being serviced, as well as those with private insurance and those under insured or uninsured.
- A case management program has been added to the range of counseling services, in which Harbor Health case managers come on site every other week to offer support services to clients with housing, healthcare benefits and employment services.

#### New Business:

*Child Abuse Awareness Week:* Third Selectman Stephen A. Fontana asked to speak before the Commission in hopes to solicit interest, gain support and participation in a proposal that had been discussed among the First, Second and Third Selectman regarding Child Abuse Awareness Week.

Mr. Fontana provided a bit of background as to how this idea had been initiated, specifically by resident Col. Ray Fowler who had asked the Selectmen to consider trying to find a way to promote the need to prevent child abuse back in April 2011. The Board of Selectmen agreed that a week to commemorate and carry this out would be feasible. Mr. Fontana provided a proposal of initiatives to pursue to fulfill the mission on educating and raising awareness, as well as what can be done to prevent it.

Mr. Fontana went on to explain the research that Second Selectman Tim Doheny and he have already done, as well as explain the framework and ideas that were brought forward at the Board of Selectmen meeting on June

2<sup>nd</sup>. The Selectmen felt that this would be appropriate to come before this commission seeking assistance in helping to carry out some of these ideas and solicit feedback.

Mr. Fontana discussed three objectives:

1. *Raising public awareness to help identify child abuse.* Included in this prevention week would include utilizing the September Board of Selectman meeting to launch this event, NHTV, websites (at State and Town levels) to publicize, just to name a few.
2. *Providing outreach.* The idea of identifying people in the community who come into contact with kids on a semi-regular or periodic basis (i.e. PTSA, coaches, interfaith non denominational groups) who would be interested in promoting this event. Then during the awareness week, speakers could be arranged to address those groups as to what they can do to prevent child abuse.
3. *Provide training.* The idea of identifying and training those people in the community who come into frequent or regular contact with kids in the community (i.e. library staff, Board of Education staff, coaches) who would benefit from training.

Mr. Fontana summarized that having a community-wide effort throughout a week in September once students go back to school really could play a strong role in the prevention of child abuse. While it does not appear that child abuse is a huge problem in North Haven, Mr. Fontana felt strongly in the value to educate the public and take advantage of opportunities like this. On a related note, Mr. Fontana wanted to make the commission aware that he and Mr. Doheny have discussed, however have not come to a consensus with the superintendent or the Board of Education as to whether the idea of age appropriate education in the school system would be appropriate.

Krista Polinsky and Judith Meyers echoed the sentiment of the commission which in full support of this idea proposed by Mr. Fontana. Ms. Meyers felt that coupling the training of awareness strategy (recognizing the signs and what to do) with a prevention strategy would be critical in the success of this program. Additionally, Donna Malley provided insight on the scheduling of this event. She indicated that the school calendar must be kept in mind when planning which week to implement this, as the first two weeks back to school are the busiest with open houses. Finally, Marc Fasano willing to further discuss with Mr. Fontana over the summer months as to how these ideas can be carried out as far as obtaining experts and research that has been conducted.

Mr. Freda indicated that while one track is being created in supporting child abuse awareness week, another track can be taken by adding this support service surrounding child abuse (associated with high stress, substance abuse and neglect) to the counseling services overseen by Harbor Health as additional service on an ongoing basis to families. Ultimately this would create a sustainable effort for families year round. Mr. Corniello indicated that in addition to the work that they can perform as social workers, they also have access to other child providers including DCF to provide help to those families who need it.

Mr. Freda summarized that he felt the role of the Board of Selectmen and through the Community Services Commission is to create the awareness of child abuse, establish the week, and provide prevention services through counseling services, then only get the Police and DCF involved if in the unfortunate event an issue of child abuse arises. In short, the role of the Board of Selectmen and the Community Services Commission is to minimize the manifestation of it, and to create awareness of it.

*Next subcommittee meeting:* The next meeting is scheduled to take place on Tuesday, July 5.  
Ms. Riccio will send an email out to all subcommittee members to confirm their attendance.

## V. Finance Report:

Mr. Swinkoski began by reviewing the YTD snapshot of the Emergency Fund, followed by the Outreach Fund.

### ***Outreach Fund (Fund 304): as of 4/30/2011:***

Project Graduation: Donations received for this year's event so far: \$7,221.00

Budget reports were reviewed by the Commission (reports ending April 30, 2011).

\*All Departments are reflecting being currently under budget, which is considered 83% or less

*Community Services:* 2011 YTD snapshot of Community Services expenditures:  
79.9% of budget expended YTD

*Welfare:* 2011 YTD snapshot of Welfare expenditures (eviction related expenses):  
78.8 % of budget expended YTD

*Senior Center:* 2011 YTD snapshot of Senior Center expenditures:  
82.9 % of budget expended YTD

*Daycare:* 2011 YTD snapshot (through May 2011): Currently \$3,674.87

#### VI. Public Participation:

Col. Ray Fowler was in attendance to introduce himself as the initiator of this proposed Child Abuse Prevention week, as well as echo his sentiment regarding the issue of child abuse. He thanked the Board of Selectmen as well as the Community Services Commission for their consideration in coordinating a Child Abuse Prevention week in North Haven. He went on to share a moving account of a case of child abuse with the commission.

#### VII. Adjournment:

Judith Meyers asked for a Motion to Adjourn, seconded by Paul Kottage. The meeting was adjourned at 6:25p.m.

The next meeting will take place on Tuesday, September 6<sup>th</sup> at 5:30pm in Room 2.